

Folks, I wish I had better news out of Columbus. I appreciate the work you do as educators. Please read the messages and do what you feel is best. If nothing else, please be informed.

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Dear Staff,

I wanted to send this email to you for a week now. It has taken me the better part of this week to make sure I form my words correctly and present to you absolute facts. I am trying to do this below. I feel very passionate that it is my duty as the superintendent of a legitimate public school district to fill you in on an occurrence I had last Thursday.

I was invited to hear Governor Kasich speak at a private "invitation" only event. At first, I declined, but after more consideration, I accepted and attended the event. Ohio House Speaker Bill Batchelder spoke for about 5 minutes and then the Governor spoke for about 20. The majority of people in the room were affiliated with the Republican Party.

When Batchelder spoke, he told this group point blank that Ohio is in the financial shape it is in because public employees have been bilking the state out of money for years. I promised myself that I would not become outraged to the point where I had to leave, so I stayed.

The Governor spoke for about 5 of the 20 minutes on Senate Bill 5. I thought you might be interested in some of the things he said. He told the audience that public employees do not pay a dime into their pension fund and that they do not pay a dime for their healthcare insurance. As you know, this is a bold face lie. The public pension systems of Ohio have noted that 98% of public employees DO pay 10% of their salary to the retirement system. I hope you know that you do as well. Ten percent of your salary goes to STRS and the school district does pay an additional 14% for you. This is no different from an employee who has a pension from his or her company or a matched 401 (k). Nearly every professional employee of any company that is worth its salt has one or both of these benefits. Additionally, many public employees pay a percentage of their health care cost. You pay 20%.

The Governor said that "we are at war with these people." He also said that he wishes they would just accept Senate Bill 5 because he is going to spend millions in tax payer money to defend it in the campaign. He said if it goes down, he and the legislature are going to "ram it through" in other legislation. He commented that his polls are showing that as many as 70% of Republicans are going to vote the bill down and he doesn't understand why.

He also tried to tell the people that he tried to sit down with union leadership and they declined. I guess he forgot that the union leadership approached him **before** Senate Bill 5 passed and he had the doors of the State House LOCKED for the first time ever in history. He locked us out of our building and said he was not discussing anything. His actions made that clear.

Although many people in the room clapped when he said other things, no one clapped during this Senate Bill 5 piece. He entertained about 10 questions. No one asked anything about Senate Bill 5. They all asked about why he is selling the turnpike to a foreign nation and why he is "selling jails" to private companies which may be foreign nations when the major religions have deemed this immoral, unethical and unjust. They also asked about tax abatements, Obama Care and Medicare in Ohio. After every single question, he turned the tables around and made a comment that public employees have caused Ohio to be in financial ruin and that is why he was doing all of these things.

I could tell you more.

I understand that Ohio is in bad financial shape. I really do. I understand that we need reform. You cannot "ram through" reform and you cannot blame the state of the economy on the hard working people of Ohio. The absolute thing that bothered me the most about the whole ordeal was that he lied to the people in that room. He spread a bold face lie as propaganda in order to make his bill look valid. It made me sick.

This Governor is a bully and the legislature is his posse. We have to stand up to this bully AND to his posse. We need to make sure that our family members, our friends, our neighbors—anyone who will listen—know the truth and know that these lies are coming from Columbus. If you don't stand up for yourself now, this will only be the beginning of a downward turn from which we will never recover.

Additional information:

As we speak, HB 136 is moving rapidly through the Ohio house. If passed into law, this bill allows ANY student in ANY public school to take their daily funding, which is now nearly \$6,000 per student, and go to the private school of their choice if the family income is less than \$95,000 per year. This money is deducted from the public school of residence. There is no regard for separation of church and state. I believe federal funds would follow the student as well. The private school is free to take or turn away any student they choose for any reason. They are free to kick them out whenever they wish. They do are not accountable in any way shape or form as you are as a public school. If this bill passes, MANY of you will loose your job. First of all, we will deal with two different consequences of this bill. #1. Most private schools cost more than \$6,000. So who will benefit? Upper middle class students and or the cream of the crop that are given scholarships by the private schools. #2. If the private school costs less than \$6,000 per year, the parent gets to bank the extra money. So that means if the parochial schools in our area choose to accept this, they could charge \$4,000 per student and the parent would get a check for \$2,000 for each kid. The lawmakers in Columbus keep trying to crush public education and we are hanging on by a thread. This and senate bill 5 will be the final nails in the coffin.

If there ever was a time to speak up and be active in government, it is now.

Hang in there,

Dr. Mike

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